



# INDUSTRY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF  
THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Washington, D.C. 20226

Number: 77-18

Date: September 1, 1977

## GINSENG IN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Proprietors of Distilled Spirits Plants,  
Bonded Wine Cellars, Breweries, Importers and  
Others Concerned:

This circular is issued to inform you that the United States Food and Drug Administration through an Import Alert dated January 21, 1977, has restricted the food use of ginseng to pure powdered or ground ginseng used in a water infusion; i. e., ginseng tea.

The Import Alert states that all food uses of ginseng must be covered by an effective food additive regulation or be affirmed as GRAS (generally recognized as safe) by an appropriate GRAS Affirmation Petition. The circular concludes with the following directive: "Any ginseng offered for entry as a component of food not covered by a food additive regulation or effective GRAS affirmation should be detained charging: 'The article is violative within the meaning of Section 801(a)(3) in that it appears to contain ginseng, an unsafe food additive, within the meaning of Section 409 (of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act).'"

Although the USFDA notice pertains to imported foods containing ginseng, we wish to advise members of the alcoholic beverage industry, especially importers, that the use of ginseng, whole root, powdered or ground, would also be prohibited as a flavoring ingredient in distilled spirits, wine and malt beverages which are offered for sale in the United States. Any importer or other member of the alcoholic beverage industry who holds a certificate of label approval for such a product is hereby requested to surrender the certificate for cancellation. We advise any industry member who desires to use ginseng in an alcoholic beverage to petition the United States Food and Drug Administration for a food additive regulation or GRAS affirmation.

Inquiries pertaining to this circular should refer to its number and be addressed to the Chief, Trade and Consumer Affairs Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20226.

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Director